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Tourists' Fresh Start Mindset in Destination Marketing

Abstract

Although tourism research has examined the reasons why people have life-changing motivations related to traveling, destination managers still lack clarity on their effects on tourists' intentions and behaviors. In response to this question, the authors investigate one of these life-changing motives: the fresh start mindset. This investigation employs a multimethod approach to examine its antecedents and outcomes and how tourism marketing-controlled factors moderate this perceptual mechanism at the pre-visit stage. This study ultimately showcases communication tactics that destination managers can use to maximize tourists' fresh start mindset by employing metaphorical persuasive techniques.

Keywords: fresh start mindset, destination marketing, persuasion, transformative tourism, solo travel, group travel.

1. Introduction

People's abilities to undergo self-transformation have been described as a foundational ontology of tourism. Visiting destinations and communities that are different from everyday life implies that individuals can break free from their routines to experience something new (e.g. Brown, 2013; Bruner, 1991; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Neuhofer & Dulbecco, 2024; Reisinger, 2013, 2015; Soulard et al., 2021). The sense of transformation in tourism can be expressed mentally, physically, or spiritually and can stem from various tourist motivations, such as self-transcendence, inner peace, solidarity, curiosity, striving for authenticity, or escapism (e.g. Soulard et al., 2021; Wolf et al., 2017). As long as individuals consider transformative tourism an opportunity to experience personal growth, there is an inherent relationship between transformative tourism and the psychological mechanism related to changing one's life (Sheldon, 2020; Soulard et al., 2021). That is, tourism activities can produce multiple feelings that reinforce beliefs and confidence that someone can change in life as part of the process of visiting a destination.

In view of the persuasive value of transformative tourism experiences, such as solo travel, wellness retreats, spiritual journeys, and volunteer tourism (Pung et al., 2020), multiple destinations worldwide use descriptors of these experiences in their marketing communication to capture how tourists' lives will change by visiting them. Such slogans include Egypt's "Where it all begins," Japan's "Endless Discovery," Denmark's "Land of Everyday Wonder," New Zealand's "100% pure," Ecuador's "Be well in Ecuador," and Belize's "Discover How to Be." However, to what extent do these efforts affect the mindset of tourists toward producing a change in their lives? And does this mindset of change have any influence on tourists' intentions and behavior?

Extant tourism research has documented how individuals can change their lives by visiting new places, having contact with their origins, or learning something new (e.g. Sheldon, 2020; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021). It has also revealed how these elements can be used in marketing campaigns (Chhabra, 2021). However, little is known about how destinations can use marketing communication to enhance tourists' motivation to produce a new chart in life and start anew (i.e. a fresh start) and which communication tactics can influence tourists' fresh start mindset (see Table 1).

[Table 1 about here]

Appealing to tourists' fresh start mindset in the pre-visit stage using marketing communication may be important, as destinations can metaphorically reinforce the notion that it is possible to change one's life by visiting them and participating in tourism activities. In this endeavor, it is proposed that certain persuasive techniques in communication, such as employing the metaphor of a fresh start by visiting a destination, may impact tourists' fresh start mindset, intentions, and behaviors in a pre-visit context.

In consumer behavior research, a fresh start mindset has been associated with the belief that, regardless of past or present circumstances, individuals can make a new start and chart a new course in their lives (Milfeld et al., 2021; Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al., 2021). From this perspective, it is claimed that individuals can metaphorically shape their life circumstances by transforming themselves while interacting with products, services, and brands that give strong meanings to their self-concepts (Price et al., 2018). Extending the applicability of the fresh start mindset from consumer behavior to tourism marketing, this investigation suggests that tourists can attain a fresh start mindset when their tourism consumption is directed to represent a change in their lives.

To activate this perceptual mechanism, destination marketing communication could induce mental associations using metaphors of change (Jaworska, 2017; Ottati &

Renstrom, 2010)—for example, mentioning that the destination will offer a “fresh start” to its visitors.

Because the fresh start mindset is a novel construct in the marketing and tourism literature (see Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023), its repercussions for tourism marketing and tourists’ intentions and behavior remain unknown. Therefore, introducing the fresh start mindset as part of transformative tourism and destination marketing raises research questions that guide our investigation: (Research Question 1) What are the antecedents and consequences of tourists’ fresh start mindset in pre-visit contexts? (Research Question 2) Could destinations influence tourists’ fresh start mindset, intention, and behavior through metaphorical cues based on promising a fresh start in life as part of their marketing communication?

In response to these questions, the present paper explores the antecedents of tourists’ fresh start mindset while planning a trip and determines its implications on intentions and behavior. Specifically, Study 1 explores tourists’ opinions about having a fresh start mindset and its antecedents; Study 2 experimentally tests the antecedents of the fresh start mindset obtained in Study 1 on tourists’ behavioral intentions; Study 3 examines the effect of planning different types of travel experiences when exposed to marketing stimuli that promise a change in life through a fresh start, and the repercussions on the fresh start mindset, visiting intentions, and spending behaviors.

Overall, examining the fresh start mindset in destination marketing offers two contributions. First, for the transformative tourism literature (e.g. Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021; Wolf et al., 2017), the fresh start mindset conceptually and empirically emerges as a belief that represents tourists’ need for a change in life through tourism consumption. Second, this study expands the range of communication tactics accessible to destination managers (e.g. Qu et

al., 2022; Morgan & Pritchard, 2014; Tong et al., 2023), by showcasing a metaphorical approach that appeals to tourists' desire for life changes through a fresh start, influencing their pre-visit intentions and spending behavior.

2. Literature review

2.1. Fresh start mindset and tourism marketing

The fresh start mindset is defined as the belief that, regardless of past or present circumstances, individuals can make a new start and chart a new course in their lives by interacting with products, services, and brands that give strong meanings to their self-concepts (Price et al., 2018). The roots of this mindset are theorized as an assemblage of the American cultural milieu, neoliberalism, global consumption culture, and liquid modernity (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023; Milfeld et al., 2021; Price et al., 2018). In the American cultural milieu, the fresh start mindset is embedded in individualism and egalitarian ideologies that emphasize an individual's self-management ability to produce a change in their life at any time (Price et al., 2018).

The cultural expression of a fresh start has been proposed by the American mass media as simple actions, normally presented as persuasive cues, that could generate profound changes in individuals' lives (Strizhakova et al., 2021)—for example, a vote for a “fresh start nation,” testing a new hair care product for a “fresh start,” or visiting an unknown destination for a “new beginning.”

As an effect of globalization, the symbolic idea of having a fresh start is expanding to other cultures. As part of the American lifestyle and the consumption of globalized products, services, and brands, the fresh start mindset has been observed in consumers from multiple countries who encounter global marketing narratives as mediums for building their identities (Strizhakova et al., 2021). The expression of the fresh start

mindset is reinforced by a global situation of high uncertainty, devaluation of individuals' trust in government institutions, and increased mobility in search of better life opportunities (White et al., 2019). Consequently, this mindset is considered a fundamental descriptor of individuals' lives, supported by constant change and flexibility (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023).

2.2. Fresh start mindset and transformative tourism

Tourism and the fresh start mindset represent individuals' opportunities to change and encounter new people and environments. This implies that the need for new beginnings in life is interrelated with tourism activities that are directed toward producing more self-inquiry about the purpose of life (i.e. transformative tourism experiences; Soulard et al., 2021). Thus, the fresh start mindset connects to transformative tourism through the belief that individuals can change in life by participating in tourism activities that hold transformative value. That is, the fresh start mindset may be integrated into multiple aspects of transformative tourism theory (e.g. Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021; Wolf et al., 2017).

Although transformative tourism has traditionally been approached from two main perspectives—transformative learning theory and existential transformation (Pung et al., 2020; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021)—the fresh start mindset is theoretically related to both. First, concerning transformative learning—in which tourism consumption is considered a response to personal circumstances that drive individuals to learn something new, self-reflect, and acquire new skills (Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Wolf et al., 2017)—the fresh start mindset helps materialize tourists' need for new beginnings through a measurable mindset (Price et al., 2018). Here, one parallelism coexists between transformative learning theory and the fresh start mindset: the idea of seeking self-

transformation from a “disorienting dilemma” (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Individuals who question their values and beliefs are more conscious of their need for new experiences to activate a life transformation (Mezirow, 2000). In such a disorienting dilemma, individuals are expected to be more motivated to consume products, services, brands, or destinations that offer them the possibility of learning something new, developing new skills, or changing their lives through a fresh start (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023).

Second, related to the existential transformation paradigm, in which tourism consumption is interpreted as an opportunity for individuals to experience meaningful and authentic encounters (e.g. Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021), the fresh start mindset is characterized by the link between tourists’ expectations and the notion that visiting a destination will implicate an existentialist revelation (Brown, 2013). This existentialist approach implies that what is expected to produce a fresh start is related to a destination’s transformation value, whether it is produced by the available activities or by the social relationships that can be developed at the destination. Therefore, the fresh start mindset expands existential transformation perspectives, incorporating tourists’ expectations of a better future and defining how this future focus influences their intentions and behavior.

2.3. Fresh start mindset and destination marketing communication

Although tourism consumption inherently incorporates the subjective idea of having a fresh start through practices such as visiting new places and being in contact with different people (Strizhakova et al., 2021), destination marketing communication, when strategically employed, can actively reinforce tourists’ fresh start mindset. Multiple uses of language may offer valuable opportunities for destinations aiming to elicit the idea of producing a change in tourists’ lives through a fresh start. Indeed, as the fresh start

mindset is embedded in a metaphor of change (Lee et al., 2023; Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al., 2021), direct mentions of having a 'fresh start' as part of destination marketing communication, may induce tourists to believe that such a change is achievable, in turn reinforcing their fresh start mindset.

In this context, metaphorical persuasion is defined as an indirect claim that uses a figurative way to describe an object/entity/experience rather than a literal way (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005; Van Stee, 2018). Following a rhetorical base, metaphorical persuasion can be constructed by words and expressions denoting multiple meanings capable of stimulating mental images, evoking emotions, facilitating visual elaboration, and influencing attitudes toward an object/entity/experience that is metaphorically described to an audience (Ottati & Renstrom, 2010; Sopory & Dillard, 2002; Van Stee, 2018). Metaphorical language is not detracted from tourism consumption (Dann, 1996; 2002). The language of tourism, whether it is used as a promotional cue by destinations or serves as part of tourists' narratives, is rich in terms of eliciting emotions, images, memories, life transformations, and sensations produced by travel experiences across prior, in-situ, and post-consumption stages (see Jaworska, 2017; Mattiello, 2012; Su & Li 2024).

From a managerial perspective, when destinations promote their tourism offerings through marketing communications (e.g. physical and online ads), it may inherently contribute to tourists' fresh start mindset in pre-visit scenarios. However, explicitly mentioning the opportunity for a fresh start in life, as a metaphor for visiting the destination (Jaworska, 2017), can further reinforce this mindset as tourists engage with more detailed promotional information, thereby influencing their intentions and spending behaviors related to the destination (Dai et al., 2014). This persuasive tactic can be developed by incorporating claims based on the metaphorical idea of a life change

through a fresh start in marketing communications, such as “Visit Destination X for a fresh start in life” instead of simply “Visit Destination X.”

2.4. Potential antecedents of tourists’ fresh start mindset

Merely mentioning a destination’s offerings in broad terms and suggesting that tourists will experience a fresh start may not be sufficient to enhance their fresh start mindset. Instead, using concrete elements related to how tourism experiences will be consumed may be necessary to reinforce tourists’ perception of a fresh start while interacting with a destination’s marketing stimuli (e.g. Jaworska, 2017; Mattiello, 2012). In this regard, destinations can enhance their marketing communication by highlighting specific activities that align with the idea of a fresh start. These activities may include solo travel, ecotourism, wellness tourism, spiritual tourism, or volunteer tourism, all of which can offer transformative travel experiences (Sheldon, 2020; Soulard et al., 2021). This positive and associative effect between a tourism activity and the fresh start is expected because enriching metaphors of change with concrete elements that drive change will enhance the persuasive power of marketing communication (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Ottati & Renstrom, 2010; Sopory & Dillard, 2002).

However, because the mental representation of a fresh start is considered part of an individualist reflection (Lee et al., 2023; Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al., 2021), tourism activities centered on individual transformation (vs. the transformation of a group of tourists) may represent a stronger antecedent of tourists’ fresh start mindset. That is, if destination marketing communication mentions that there is an individualist benefit derived from transformative activities centered on tourists’ self—e.g. traveling alone (Bruner 1991; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Sheldon, 2020; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021)—

it could induce a strong fresh start mindset in tourists compared to a communication that highlights the transformative benefits of experiences shared with a group of tourists.

In this regard, it is plausible to consider that planning solo trips related to transformative tourism can facilitate the perception that individuals are fully immersed in a destination's physical and social contexts (e.g. Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Sheldon, 2020; Tasci & Godovykh, 2021), therefore reinforcing the idea that tourists can have transformative experiences and thus a stronger fresh start mindset. This reinforcement of the fresh start mindset is expected because solo trip experiences drive individuals to focus on what is happening in unfamiliar physical and social contexts, giving them the opportunity to express new agencies, roles, and attitudes (Bianchi, 2021; Yang, 2021).

Taken together, solo travelers may have fewer limitations when reflecting on a new self, adopting a new identity, or becoming a different person. In contrast, traveling in a group could constrain and distract tourists from reflecting on themselves, as being part of a group requires extra cognitive effort to accommodate the group's dynamics, idiosyncrasies, and interactions (Yang & Tung, 2018). Therefore, when used in the context of planning group trip experiences, the fresh start mindset may be limited in its capacity to strongly drive intentions and spending behavior when it comes to the idea of visiting a destination. However, since the antecedents of tourists' fresh start mindset still represent an understudied phenomenon (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023), this investigation first explores these propositions with a qualitative study and further tests research hypotheses in a series of two experiments.

3. Methods

To address our research questions, a multimethod approach with three studies is developed (see Table 2). With a focus group and photo-elicitation techniques, Study 1 analyzes tourists'

ideas and beliefs about having a fresh start and its antecedents. Second, using an experiment guided by Study 1's findings, Study 2 tests the antecedents of the fresh start mindset (i.e. travel companion; solo vs. group trip experience) and their effects on tourists' behavioral intentions. Finally, Study 3 examines the effect of a destination's communication that combines the presentation of a travel experience (solo vs. group vs. without mentioning travel parties) and the promise of a change in tourists' lives through a fresh start (vs. not mentioning it) on tourists' fresh start mindset, intentions, and spending behavior.

[Table 2 about here]

3.1. Study 1. Understanding tourists' fresh start mindset

To explore how tourists interpret the fresh start mindset and the potential antecedents of this construct, a 60-minute focus group session combined with a photo-elicitation technique was conducted. In total, 20 European undergraduate students were recruited through non-probability quota sampling, including only individuals who have traveled one or more times per year for leisure purposes (see sample profile in Table 3). The participants were asked to describe, both orally and in writing, their opinions about having a fresh start by visiting a destination, as well as the elements that facilitate tourists' fresh start. As having a mental image of a fresh start may be perceived as complex, participants were asked to select one image (personal or from the Internet) that suggested to them the idea of having a fresh start while traveling (Appendix A; see a similar approach of this photo-elicitation technique in Price et al., 2018).

[Table 3 about here]

The participants' narratives were examined through open, axial, and selective coding using a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and computerized topic analysis. The combination of manual coding with computerized procedures was

used to examine whether the themes coded by the authors also emerged in a computerized approach with similar categorizations (Su et al., 2017).

As part of the open coding phase, the participants' quotes were extracted line by line. During the axial coding, terms and abstract ideas related to the theoretical concepts representing the fresh start mindset were analyzed. Lastly, the selective coding process involved isolating the main themes identified in the participants' narratives (see Table 4).

For the computerized topic analysis, MeaningCloud software was used to categorize the different latent topics from the information provided by the participants on a word-by-word basis. The software algorithm is based on a hybrid approach (i.e. a combination of machine learning and linguistic processes supported by lexical resources; Martínez et al., 2016). In short, the topics extracted using MeaningCloud supported manual coding results (see Table 4).

[Table 4 about here]

Results. Overall, the tourists' fresh start mindset was embedded in three main themes: (1) connecting with one's true self by traveling alone, (2) reflection and psychological recovery, and (3) contact with different people, environments, and cultures. These findings indicate that the fresh start mindset embraces multiple elements of the theoretical definitions of transformative tourism through transformative learning theory (i.e. individuals' motivations to experience something new and have time to reflect on one's life circumstances; Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Wolf et al., 2017) and existential transformation frameworks (i.e. breaking away from the dynamics of everyday life to experience something different; Brown, 2013; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b).

In line with the theoretical roots of the fresh start mindset (Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al., 2021), the participants' interpretations of a fresh start while traveling entailed individualistic motivations, such as solo travel, which could be observed as a

principal antecedent of the fresh start mindset. This evidence is visually and narratively supported. First, most images selected by participants representing a fresh start incorporate one person or no one (75%) rather than a group of people (25%; $Z = 2.23$; $p < .05$, see Appendix A).

Second, the participants declared that traveling alone facilitated deep reflection on their life goals, opportunities to learn something new, and direct contact with new lifestyles. In contrast, the participants mentioned that traveling in a group could limit (but not eliminate) their capabilities for self-reflection and for having a fresh start. They supported this argument, considering that being part of a group could distract individuals from what is happening around them to accommodate the group's interactions. This differentiation between solo and group traveling is linked to previous research that has discussed the characteristics of solo/group travel (e.g. Bianchi, 2022; Yang & Tung, 2018).

Discussion. Study 1 found that tourists' perception of a fresh start aligns with its definition in consumer behavior literature. This construct is described as the belief that individuals can make a new beginning and navigate a new path in their lives, irrespective of their past or present circumstances (Price et al., 2018). Study 1 amplifies this definition in the tourism literature by documenting that visiting a destination and traveling are concrete triggers of tourists' fresh start mindset, especially when considering the experience of solo travel. Given these considerations, it is reasonable to assert that tourism and the fresh start mindset are ontologically interrelated. That is, the essence of tourism and travel embodies the metaphorical idea of personal transformation that can arise from experiences associated with various destinations, attractions, or service providers (Jaworska, 2017; Mattiello, 2012; Su & Li, 2024). This connection is tested in greater detail in the following experiments.

3.2. Study 2. Fresh start mindset and traveling alone

In Study 1, traveling alone emerged as a potential antecedent of tourists' fresh start mindset. Consequently, in Study 2, a deductive approach was employed to examine whether planning a solo versus a group trip, as categorical antecedents, influences tourists' fresh start mindset and behavioral intentions.

In line with the participants' comments in Study 1 and prior tourism research (e.g. Bianchi, 2022; Yang, 2021; Yang & Tung, 2018), it is expected that solo trip experiences will enhance the perception that individuals can easily have transformative experiences, thereby promoting a stronger fresh start mindset. This reinforcement of the fresh start mindset is considered for two main reasons. First, the idea of a fresh start is linked with an individualist reflection on how an individual's life can change through experiences with strong symbolic meaning (Lee et al., 2023; Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al., 2021). Therefore, tourism activities that focus on individual transformation (e.g. traveling alone), as opposed to the transformation of a group of tourists (e.g. traveling in a group), may have a greater influence on the development of tourists' fresh start mindset.

Second, solo trip experiences inspire individuals to focus on events in unfamiliar physical and social contexts, thus allowing them to express new roles, agencies, and attitudes (Yang, 2021). More specifically, solo travelers may have fewer barriers that prevent them from reflecting on a new self, adopting a new identity, or becoming a different person (Bianchi, 2022; Yang & Tung, 2018). In light of this theoretical discussion, it is proposed that solo trip experiences could influence tourists' fresh start mindset by offering tourists the expectation of having opportunities to express their identities without the constraints of everyday life, further producing a psychological mechanism (i.e. mediation model; Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023) that enhances

individuals' intentions to visit a destination. In accordance with this proposition, the following hypothesis is formally presented:

H₁: Planning a solo (vs. group) trip positively influences tourists' fresh start mindset and subsequently enhances their intention to visit the destination.

Methods. U.S. participants from Qualtrics online panels were recruited for Study 2 ($n = 120$; 14 did not pass the attention checks; final sample = 106; see sample profile in Table 3). As part of the sampling method, only individuals from the online panel who had traveled for leisure at least once in the previous year were included. The participants were instructed to imagine planning a trip for their next vacation. Further, they were randomly distributed to one of the two possible conditions: planning a solo trip or planning a group trip with friends (see Appendix B).

As a manipulation check, for the conditions related to travel companion (i.e. solo vs. group), the participants used a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) to evaluate whether the trip would allow them time to reflect on their life goals, using two *ad hoc* items (i.e. while visiting the destination, "you would have time to reflect on yourself," "you would have time to reflect on your things, individual problems, and goals in life"; $r = .86$). Overall, participants in the solo trip condition perceived their experience as more conducive to self-reflection ($M = 6.02$, $SD = .96$) compared to those in the group trip condition ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.38$; $F(1, 105) = 42.66$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .29$).

Next, participants rated their intention to visit the destination with three items ($\alpha = .85$) adapted from Lam and Hsu (2006) and six items regarding the fresh start mindset construct (Price et al., 2018; $\alpha = .94$; see items' description and validity in Table 5) on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). An analysis of the skewness and kurtosis of the measurement variables (range of values from -1.27 to 1.62)

shows that the indicators meet the basic requirements for normality (Hair et al., 2010). An exploratory factor analysis with a varimax rotation was conducted to test the applicability of the fresh start mindset construct in the tourism context. The results supported the existence of two expected factors (fresh start mindset and intention to visit the destination; variance explained = 79%, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .85; Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant, $X^2_{36} = 832.30$; $p < .001$). Additionally, the results indicated discriminant validity between the fresh start mindset and the intention to visit a destination (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; see Table 5).

[Table 5 about here]

Results. Intention to visit. Across experimental conditions, the participants showed similarly high evaluations of their intention to visit the destination ($M_{\text{solo_trip}} = 6.27$, $SD = .87$; $M_{\text{group_trip}} = 6.00$, $SD = .83$; $F(1, 105) = 2.96$; $p > .05$; $\eta^2 = .02$).

Fresh start mindset. As predicted, solo trip experience enhanced the tourists' fresh start mindset ($M_{\text{solo_trip}} = 5.00$, $SD = 1.22$) compared to the group trip condition ($M_{\text{group_trip}} = 4.47$, $SD = 1.16$; $F(1, 105) = 5.22$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .04$).

Mediation model: To test whether travel companion (solo vs. group) influences behavioral intentions through the mediation of tourists' fresh start mindset, a mediation model was developed (PROCESS model 4; Hayes, 2022; see Figure 1 and Appendix C). The results confirmed that the fresh start mindset mediates the relationship between solo trip experience (vs. group trip) and intention to visit the destination (indirect effect = .14; $SE = .07$; 95% CI = .02 to .28).

[Insert Figure 1]

Discussion. In response to the first research question and in support of hypothesis 1, Study 2 provided evidence that a psychological mechanism, mediated by the fresh start mindset, leads to stronger positive outcomes for tourists' behavioral intentions when

considering solo travel experiences, compared to group travel experiences. This finding builds upon the qualitative insights obtained in Study 1, where an ontological interrelationship between tourism and the fresh start mindset emerged. Specifically, Study 2 empirically demonstrates that contemplating the idea of visiting a destination alone enhances tourists' fresh start mindset and their behavioral intentions in online experimental settings.

Study 3. Enhancing tourists' fresh start mindset with metaphorical persuasion

In Study 2, results indicated that planning travel experiences, such as solo travel to a destination, impacts tourists' fresh start mindset and intention to visit. Study 3 investigates these findings further by looking at whether offering different experiences (solo, group, or not specifying travel companions) and employing a life-changing persuasive cue tied to a fresh start in destination communication enhance tourists' fresh start mindset, intentions to visit, and spending behaviors. Overall, Study 3 builds on previous research by identifying actionable messages that can be directly utilized in destination marketing.

In line with prior research (Jaworska, 2017; Mattiello, 2012; Strizhakova et al., 2021; Su & Li, 2024) and the results of Study 2, it is plausible to predict that a destination's advertising, which mentions the idea of solo travel (vs. group travel or the absence of travel companions), along with highlighting the possibility of a fresh start at the destination (vs. not mentioning it), will positively influence tourists' intentions and spending behavior indirectly through the fresh start mindset. This is because enriching metaphors of change with concrete elements (e.g. traveling alone to have a fresh start) can enhance the persuasive power of advertisements and help the audience better understand the message being communicated (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Milkman, 2021;

Ottati & Renstrom, 2010; Sopory & Dillard, 2002). Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{2a}: Planning a solo trip (vs. group trip vs. not mentioning travel parties) when evaluating a destination marketing communication that mentions the possibility of having a fresh start (vs. communications that do not mention it), strongly influences tourists' fresh start mindset and, subsequently, their intention to visit the destination.

H_{2b}: Planning a solo trip (vs. group trip vs. not mentioning travel parties) when evaluating a destination marketing communication that mentions the possibility of having a fresh start (vs. communications that do not mention it) strongly influences tourists' fresh start mindset and, subsequently, their spending behavior.

Methods. U.S. participants from Prolific Academic online panels were recruited ($N = 590$; 46 did not pass the attention checks; final sample = 544; see sample profile in Table 3). As in Study 2, the sampling method in Study 3 only included individuals from the online panel who had traveled for leisure purposes in the past year. The participants were asked to imagine planning a trip to a destination that presented visual stimuli to them (see Appendix D). More concretely, the participants were randomly distributed to a condition in a 3 (travel typology: solo vs. group vs. not mentioning travel parties) \times 2 (destination persuasive communication: mentioning a life-change cue vs. without mentioning a life-change cue) between-subjects design. The conditions based on travel typology stimulated the idea of traveling alone, in a group, or not mentioning travel parties at all. Furthermore, conditions with destination communication varied in terms of presenting or not presenting a persuasive cue based on producing a change in tourists' lives through a fresh start.

To test the manipulations, participants were asked to rate one item that captured the extent to which they considered that the destination promised a change in their lives (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) and whether the trip would allow them time to reflect on their life goals, using two *ad hoc* items (i.e. while visiting the destination, “you would have time to reflect on yourself,” “you would have time to reflect on your things, individual problems, and goals in life”; $r = .83$; 1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). First, the participants presented with a persuasive cue based on producing a change in life, through a fresh start, indicated a higher value for the extent to which they perceived that the destination promises a change in their lives ($M_{\text{with the persuasive cue}} = 4.64$, $SD = 1.38$; $M_{\text{without the persuasive cue}} = 3.67$, $SD = 1.25$; $F(1, 543) = 73.42$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .12$).

Second, in the solo trip condition, the trip was seen as more likely to give participants time to reflect on themselves ($M = 5.69$, $SD = .81$) compared to the group trip condition ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.10$; $F(1, 376) = 7.62$; $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .02$) and the condition that did not mention the travel parties ($M = 5.50$, $SD = .81$; $F(1, 344) = 4.46$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .01$). Further, there were no differences between the group trip and the condition not mentioning travel parties ($p\text{-value} > .05$), so these conditions were combined for the rest of the analysis.

Next, the participants were presented with a behavioral task in which they indicated how much money they would pay for visiting the displayed destination. The participants freely entered the maximum amount from a budget limit of \$2,000 (i.e. average summer vacation travel spent per person in the U.S., Statista 2022) through a slider question to help them contextualize the task. After the behavioral task, they rated three items for intention to visit the destination (Lam & Hsu, 2006; $\alpha = .94$) and six items for the fresh start mindset (Price et al., 2018; $\alpha = .93$) on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree; see items’ description and validity in Table 6). An analysis of skewness

and kurtosis supports that the indicators used for measurement variables (range of values from $-.98$ to $.44$) meet the basic conditions for normality (Hair et al., 2010).

[Table 6 about here]

Results. Intentions and willingness to pay. The MANOVA results yielded significant crossed interactions (see Table 7) between trip typology and the presence of the persuasive cue (Wilks' lambda = $.97$; $F(2, 539) = 7.60$, $p < .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .02$) with intentions ($F(1, 543) = 13.88$, $p < .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .02$) and willingness to pay ($F(1, 543) = 6.13$, $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .01$).

Overall, when a solo trip is included in a destination's communication that emphasizes the fresh start as a persuasive cue, it significantly enhances intentions to visit ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.28$) and willingness to pay ($M = \$1155.71$, $SD = \$426.68$) compared to the condition that does not highlight the fresh start persuasive cue ($M_{\text{intention}} = 4.45$, $SD = 1.52$; $F(1, 177) = 9.50$; $p < .01$; $M_{\text{WTP}} = \$1034.80$, $SD = \$452.29$; $F(1, 177) = 3.32$; $p < .10$).

[Table 7 about here]

Fresh start mindset. The ANOVA results showed that the main effects of the type of trip ($F(1, 543) = 4.13$; $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .008$) and the presence of the persuasive cue based on the fresh start ($F(1, 543) = 15.07$; $p < .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .02$) were significant for the fresh start mindset. Furthermore, the findings confirmed a significant interaction between trip typology and the use of the fresh start cue in the destination's communication for the participants' fresh start mindset ($F(1, 543) = 16.33$; $p < .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .03$). In sum, when a solo trip is presented with as part of a destination's communication that also mentions a change in life through a fresh start as a persuasive cue, the communication leads to a greater level of fresh start mindset on participants ($M = 4.96$, $SD = .83$) than without mentioning the fresh start ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.18$; $F(1, 177) = 28.69$; $p < .001$).

Moderated mediation. In line with the theoretical discussion, the fresh start mindset should mediate the relationships among travel typology, intentions to visit, and willingness to

pay to visit the destination. Additionally, it is considered that the mediating role of the fresh start mindset would be more relevant to tourists' intentions and willingness to pay when the destination uses the persuasive cue of having a fresh start in marketing communication (see Figure 2 and Appendix E). To test this proposition, a moderated mediation model is conducted (PROCESS model 7; 5,000 subsamples; Hayes, 2022).

[Figure 2 about here]

The indirect effects among travel typology, the fresh start mindset, intention to visit (indirect effect = .44; $SE = .11$; 95% CI = .22 to .68), and willingness to pay (indirect effect = .11; $SE = .05$; 95% CI = .03 to .23) were significant in the presence of the communication stimulating a change in life through a fresh start.

Discussion. Study 3 addressed the second research question and confirmed hypothesis 2 (a and b). The findings demonstrated an additive persuasive mechanism associated with planning a solo trip, which is further reinforced by the promise of life changes conveyed through destination marketing communications. This has implications for tourists' fresh start mindset, intentions, and spending behavior. Overall, findings suggest that destinations can influence tourists' fresh start mindset through communication strategies in the pre-travel stage. These strategies appear particularly influential in shaping intentions and spending behavior when they highlight the benefits of traveling alone and the potential for a fresh start as a result of visiting the destination.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Tourists' needs for life changes could materialize in various forms, such as changes in everyday life routines, recovery from difficult situations, increases in well-being, or the creation of new life chapters (e.g. Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Pung et al., 2020; Sheldon, 2020; Strizhakova et al., 2021). Although these different change goals could

have unique consequences for tourist intentions and behavior, most are still unknown to academics and destination managers (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023).

In response, this paper focuses on the antecedents and consequences of tourists' fresh start mindset—a new concept in transformative tourism that represents an individual's belief in starting anew in life when visiting a destination. The paper builds on prior consumer behavior research (Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al., 2021; White et al., 2019) suggesting that this mindset is related to individuals' need for changes in life and that this motivation could be reinforced by metaphorical techniques embedded in destination marketing communication (e.g. Jaworska, 2017; Mattiello, 2012; Su & Li, 2024). By examining the use of the fresh start motive in destination communication, this paper expands the range of persuasive tactics available to destinations in their quest for more effective marketing campaigns. Instead of simply describing a destination's offerings, destination marketing should introduce the metaphorical idea that visiting a destination represents a 'fresh start,' which in turn enhances tourists' visiting intentions and spending behavior.

By addressing the question of the antecedents and consequences of tourists' fresh start mindset, this investigation revealed that certain characteristics of a trip, such as traveling alone (as opposed to in a group), inherently influence the intensity of the fresh start mindset during the pre-travel phase (Studies 1 and 2). Additionally, results demonstrated that destinations' communication can reinforce the inherent effect of offering a solo travel experience on the fresh start mindset by including persuasive cues that promise a change in tourists' lives via a 'fresh start' through destination advertising.

In this regard, the last study (Study 3) showed that when tourists plan a solo trip experience and see an advertisement promising a life change through a fresh start in a particular destination, it positively persuades them. This impacts their fresh start mindset,

intentions, and spending behaviors. The results support all the hypotheses proposed in this investigation by showing that considering a solo travel experience (vs. group or unspecified travel party) produces a stronger fresh start mindset for tourists, ultimately enhancing their intentions to visit a destination and spending behaviors.

4.1. Theoretical contributions

First, this investigation has expanded extant transformative tourism research by introducing a construct that explains how tourism experiences can satisfy tourists' search for new beginnings (i.e. a fresh start). The fresh start mindset is interwoven with tourism transformative learning theory (e.g. Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Wolf et al., 2017) and existential transformation research (e.g. Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b). This is because tourism and the fresh start mindset implicate an opportunity to learn something new, develop new skills, and generate self-renewal by engaging with something that tourists do not typically engage with in their everyday lives.

Related to transformative learning theory (e.g. Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022; Wolf et al., 2017), the fresh start mindset is an effort to materialize tourists' needs for new beginnings in life via tourism consumption as a measurable and distinctive mindset. In this regard, Studies 1, 2, and 3 demonstrated the validity, reliability, and predictive power of the fresh start mindset in the tourism context.

Related to existential transformation in tourism (e.g. Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Pung et al., 2020), the fresh start mindset helps explain how expectations of a future life change are formed as part of a pre-stage scenario in which tourists engage with marketing stimuli before deciding their destination. Destinations could influence tourists' fresh start mindset and behavior through marketing campaigns in the pre-visit stage by offering

transformative experiences (such as solo travel experiences) and adding persuasive cues suggesting that tourists can change their lives through the destination via a 'fresh start.'

In addition, this investigation reveals that having a fresh start mindset is not only subordinated to the consumption of products, services, or brands as designed and offered by companies (Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al., 2021). Rather, tourist destinations that integrate commercial products, services, experiences, and social and environmental interactions as a whole can also drive individuals' evaluations of whether it is possible to produce a change in life (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023; White et al., 2019).

Notably, the fresh start mindset within the tourism ontology encourages destination marketing research to extend beyond communication strategies and investigate how tourism experiences can directly stimulate this mindset as part of tourists' existential transformation. In other words, the fresh start mindset of tourists could also be influenced at all stages of travel (pre-, in situ, post-travel) by tourism, hospitality, and event companies at destinations. In practice, destination and service managers could design tourist attractions and experiences based on the level at which these elements are perceived as enhancers of tourists' fresh start mindsets. Overall, efforts to measure the fresh start mindset longitudinally—throughout the tourist journey—may help tourism and service researchers better understand the existential and transformative value of destinations and service providers (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2023).

4.2. Managerial contributions

According to this investigation, using persuasive cues in advertising that evoke the idea of having a fresh start at a destination can reinforce tourists' fresh start mindset, intentions, and spending behaviors before their visit. Destinations can benefit from the “fresh start effect” by integrating and explicitly mentioning the possibility of starting

fresh while visiting the destination in their marketing communications. For example, instead of communicating, “Here at the destination, all is ready for you,” they can say, “Here at the destination, all is ready for your fresh start.”

In this regard, the results encourage destination marketers to go beyond merely describing the destination or its tourism attractions in marketing communications. Specifically, the transformative value of a destination can be highlighted through a metaphorical persuasive approach that, before their visit, communicates the possibility for tourists to change their lives through a ‘fresh start’. Importantly, the results indicate that this persuasive mechanism is not equally valuable for every tourist. In particular, this study demonstrates that enhancing tourists’ fresh start mindset is more effective when they are considering the idea of traveling alone. This is because solo travelers can focus completely on what is happening in unfamiliar physical and social contexts and perceive fewer limitations to reflecting on a new self, adopting a new identity, or becoming a different person (Bianchi, 2022; Yang, 2021; Yang & Tung, 2018). Therefore, destination campaigns that emphasize the possibility of a fresh start should primarily target solo travelers to enhance the effectiveness of this persuasive tactic.

Although this research provides insights into how tourists’ fresh start mindset can be influenced in the pre-travel stage, there are multiple actions managers can employ to determine whether destinations are regarded as facilitators of tourists’ self-renewal. The fresh start mindset scale used in this investigation can complement destination performance indicators (e.g., satisfaction, destination attractiveness, service quality) when evaluating the potential of a destination to produce existential and transformative value for tourists across in situ and post-travel phases.

Furthermore, as individuals with a strong fresh start mindset tend to be more open to engaging in new life experiences (Strizhakova et al., 2021), destinations can evaluate whether innovations in their marketing strategies, such as the implementation of AI assistants and digital planning and recommendation systems, can enhance or sustain this mindset (Wang, 2025). This can be achieved by recognizing and categorizing tourism experiences at the destination that tourists describe as having high ‘fresh start value’—meaning destinations that allow them to begin anew in life after their visit. In this process, destination managers can expect solo travelers to exhibit a stronger fresh start mindset. Therefore, these tourists are more likely to accurately evaluate the potential of destination innovations to influence this specific mindset as a result of their travels.

4.3. Limitations and future research

This research is not exempt from limitations. First, three studies were conducted in controlled settings to explore the impact of offering various travel experiences, including metaphors of change as persuasive cues (i.e. having a fresh start in life), on tourists’ fresh start mindset, visiting intentions, and spending behavior. Therefore, future studies should use field experiments to support the generalizability of the results.

Second, although this investigation examined the fresh start mindset when tourists consider traveling alone, in a group, or not mentioning travel parties, there may be other activities that future studies can test as antecedents. For example, more concrete activities with transformative value for tourists, such as wellness, spiritual retreats, or volunteer tourism (Pung et al., 2020). Similarly, future research should specify whether tourists’ fresh start mindset varies in intensity according to individuals’ generational cohort and cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Individuals from cultures that consider a fresh start essential to their identity (e.g., U.S. tourists; Price et al., 2018; Strizhakova et al.,

2021) may be more likely to respond to destination communications emphasizing the potential to start anew in life by traveling. In parallel, a longitudinal approach can be used to analyze the fresh start mindset by comparing the pre-travel, in situ, and post-travel consumption phases. This analysis could establish whether the fresh start mindset is a temporary or long-lasting phenomenon.

Third, measuring tourists' fresh start mindset allows for further exploration of the positive association between seeking self-renewal and identity shifts through travel and socially and environmentally sustainable behaviors (Strizhakova et al., 2021).

Specifically, future studies could investigate whether tourists visiting destinations that promote a fresh start mindset display more responsible behavior in their interactions with social and environmental contexts and the factors influencing such behavior. This line of research could also expand on the idea that both people and environments at destinations can have a fresh start.

Finally, tourists' fresh start mindset can be analyzed as a crossed reality. Researchers might evaluate how tourists perceive the residents of a destination as having a fresh start, and vice versa. This information may help destination managers design more transformative and sustainable experiences without losing competitive advantages and producing positive changes in life for both residents and tourists at destinations.

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Table 1. Extant research and contributions of this study

Triggers for producing a change in life	Methods	Main findings	Authors by date
Self-transformation and native-self transformation	Conceptual	The impact of tourism on the native self is profound, while the tourist's self remains largely unchanged by the tour.	Bruner (1991)
Self-authenticity	Conceptual	Tourism acts not simply as a substitute, but as a catalyst, for existential authenticity.	Brown (2013)
Self-transformation	Qualitative study	Revealed the transformative power of couchsurfing experiences, the underlying transformational processes, conditions, and sociopsychological and behavioral consequences.	Decrop et al. (2017)
Self-transformation	Qualitative study	Triggering episodes tend to occur at the end of travel. It furthermore appears that when triggers are co-created by tourists, an extraordinary experience is a result, transformative experience, however, occurs when triggers are also made sense of.	Kirillova et al. (20217a)
Self-transformation, Self-authenticity, and existential anxiety	Qualitative study	Existential anxiety felt post-trip motivates tourists to resolve pertinent existential dilemmas and to initiate meaningful life changes.	Kirillova et al. (20217b)
Self-transformation and connection with the environment	Systematic review	Transformative travel improves participants' psychological, physiological, social, economic and environmental conditions, as well as satisfaction with and destination loyalty towards protected parks.	Wolf et al. (2017)
Connection with others and the environment, self-inquiry and engaged contribution	Conceptual	Tourism scenarios involving deep human connectivity, deep environmental connectivity, self-inquiry and engaged contribution or some combination of these four scenarios can shift human consciousness.	Sheldon et al. (2020)
Tourist transformation	Conceptual	Liminality, cultural shock and challenges faced at the destination initiate transformation by provoking peak episodes, dilemmas, and new performances.	Pung et al. (2020)
Transformative travel experience	Multimethod study	A four-dimensional scale, composed of the dimensions of local residents and culture, self-assurance, disorienting dilemma, and joy, can be used to measure the process and outcomes of transformative travel.	Soulard et al. (2021)
Transformation process through trip experiences	Multimethod study	A 101-item scale was developed to capture the steps of the transformation process.	Tasci & Godovykh (2021)
Varying self	Qualitative study	The experiences of astronauts, econauts, and psychonauts are explored and synthesised into a multi-phasic transformative experience process model from initiation to integration - through the stages of the varying self.	Neuhofer & Dulbecco (2024)
Start anew in life (fresh start)	Multimethod study	Planning a solo trip experience directly enhances the fresh start mindset and indirectly increases intentions to visit a destination through the mediating role of the fresh start mindset. There is a persuasive mechanism inherent in planning a solo trip experience, reinforced by the promise of a change in life by a destination with implications for tourists' fresh start mindset, intentions, and spending behavior.	This study

Note. The literature review is not intended to be exhaustive but includes influential articles from each categorized research perspective.

Table 2. Research overview

Study	Main results
Study 1 Tourists' fresh start mindset conceptualization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $n = 20$ European undergraduate students. • Focus group and visual elicitation. • Grounded theory and computerized topic analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourists' interpretation of a fresh start is related to three main themes: (1) connecting with one's true self by traveling alone, (2) reflection and psychological recovery, and (3) contact with different people, environments, and cultures.
Study 2. Fresh start mindset and travel companion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $n = 106$ U.S. tourists (online panel). • Experiment: Participants were randomly distributed to one of the two possible conditions: planning a solo trip or planning a group trip with friends. • EFA and discriminant validity. • Mediation analysis (Process Model 4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning a solo trip experience directly enhances the fresh start mindset and indirectly increases intention to visit a destination through the mediating role of the fresh start mindset.
Study 3. Fresh start mindset, travel typology, and metaphorical communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $n = 544$ U.S. tourists (online panel). • Experiment: 3 (travel typology: solo vs. group vs. not mentioning travel parties) \times 2 (destination persuasive communication: mentioning a life change cue ["fresh start"] vs. without mentioning a life change cue ["fresh start"]). • EFA and discriminant validity. • Moderated-mediation model (Process Model 7). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a persuasive mechanism inherent in planning a solo trip experience that is reinforced by the promise of a change in life by destination marketing (a fresh start). This has implications for tourists' fresh start mindset, travel intentions, and spending behaviors.

Table 3. Sample profiles

	Study 1 <i>n</i> = 20	Study 2 <i>n</i> = 106	Study 3 <i>n</i> = 544
Gender			
Male	35% (7)	53% (56)	47% (256)
Female	60% (12)	44% (47)	51% (277)
Other	5% (1)	3% (3)	2% (11)
Age			
18–24	100% (20)	30% (32)	27% (147)
25–34	-	33% (34)	34% (185)
35–44	-	17% (18)	14% (76)
45–54	-	12% (13)	8% (44)
55–64	-	6% (5)	11% (60)
65–74	-	1% (2)	5% (27)
> 74	-	1% (2)	1% (5)
Education			
Less than high school	-	10% (11)	14% (76)
High school graduate	-	47% (49)	33% (179)
Currently pursuing a college degree	100% (20)	28% (29)	28% (152)
Bachelor's degree	-	14% (15)	17% (93)
Master's degree	-	1% (2)	6% (33)
Ph.D. degree	-	-	2% (11)
Occupation			
Working full time	-	52% (55)	58% (316)
Working part time	-	12% (13)	6% (33)
Unemployed	-	6% (7)	8% (44)
Student	100% (20)	25% (26)	26% (140)
Retired	-	5% (5)	2% (11)
Other	-	-	-
Travel frequency per year (leisure purposes)			
> 1 leisure trip per year	50% (10)	59% (62)	63% (343)
> 2 leisure trips per year	35% (7)	30% (32)	18% (98)
> 3 leisure trips per year	15% (3)	9% (10)	11% (59)
> 4 leisure trips per year	-	2% (2)	8% (44)

Note: The specific number of participants is presented in brackets.

Table 4. Study 1: Manual and computerized coding of the narratives extracted from the participants in the focus group

	Examples of open coding from participants' narratives (line-by-line coding)		Subthemes (axial coding)	Main themes extracted from both coding procedures (selective themes)
Manual coding	"Travel alone to another country," "connect with yourself," "do a pilgrimage," and "travel alone to an unknown destination"		Connecting with the true self; traveling alone	Tourists' interpretations of a fresh start are related to three main themes:
	"time to reflect," "reflect on your future life," "time for reflection and mindfulness," "spiritual trip," "peace of mind," and "personal reflection"		Reflection, psychological recovery; individual reflection	
	"see different landscapes," "new cultures," "paradisiacal environments," "visiting exotic places," "living with other environments," "culturally strong destination," and "meet new people"		Contact with different people, environments, and culture	
Computerized coding	Term form (from the topic analysis)	Categories from the topic analysis	Subthemes (interpretative)	(1) Connecting with the true self while traveling alone; (2) reflection and psychological recovery; and (3) contact with different people, environments, and cultures
	"freedom," "connection," "pilgrimage," "life style," "alone"	Top>Person Top>SocialSciences>Law	Connecting with the true self; individual experience	
	"soul," "spirit," "resting," "relaxing," and "peace"	Top>Person Top>Society>Leisure Top>Society>Religion	Reflection; psychological recovery	
	"environment," "atmosphere," "people," "culture," "urban," "museums," "city," "people," "leisure," and "landscape"	Top>Person Top>Location Top>SocialSciences>Law Top>NaturalSciences Top>Organization>ArtisticOrganization>Museum	Contact with different people, environments, and cultures	

Table 5. Study 2: Validity of measures from the construct and item levels

Discriminant validity. Construct level	Construct category	Alpha; CR; (AVE)	(1)	(2)
(1) Fresh start mindset	Mediator (scale)	.94; .94; (.73)	.85	
(2) Intention to visit the destination	Dependent variable (scale)	.87; .87; (.70)	.41	.84
Exploratory factor analysis. Item level				
Fresh_start mindset_1	Regardless of present circumstances, someone who travels to the destination presented can chart a new course in life.		.81	.08
Fresh_start mindset_2	Anyone can make a new start if they want after visiting the destination presented.		.89	.15
Fresh_start mindset_3	It is always possible for someone to get a new beginning after visiting the destination presented.		.86	.15
Fresh_start mindset_4	Whatever their past, people can look forward to a new future after visiting the destination presented.		.89	.17
Fresh_start mindset_5	An individual can let go of the past and start anew after visiting the destination presented.		.85	.25
Fresh_start mindset_6	When something bad happens, a person can choose to create a better life after visiting the destination presented.		.85	.20
Intentions_1	I really want to visit the destination presented.		.15	.93
Intentions_2	The destination presented could be among my most desired future trips.		.21	.76
Intentions_3	If I could, I would visit the destination presented in the future.		.14	.92

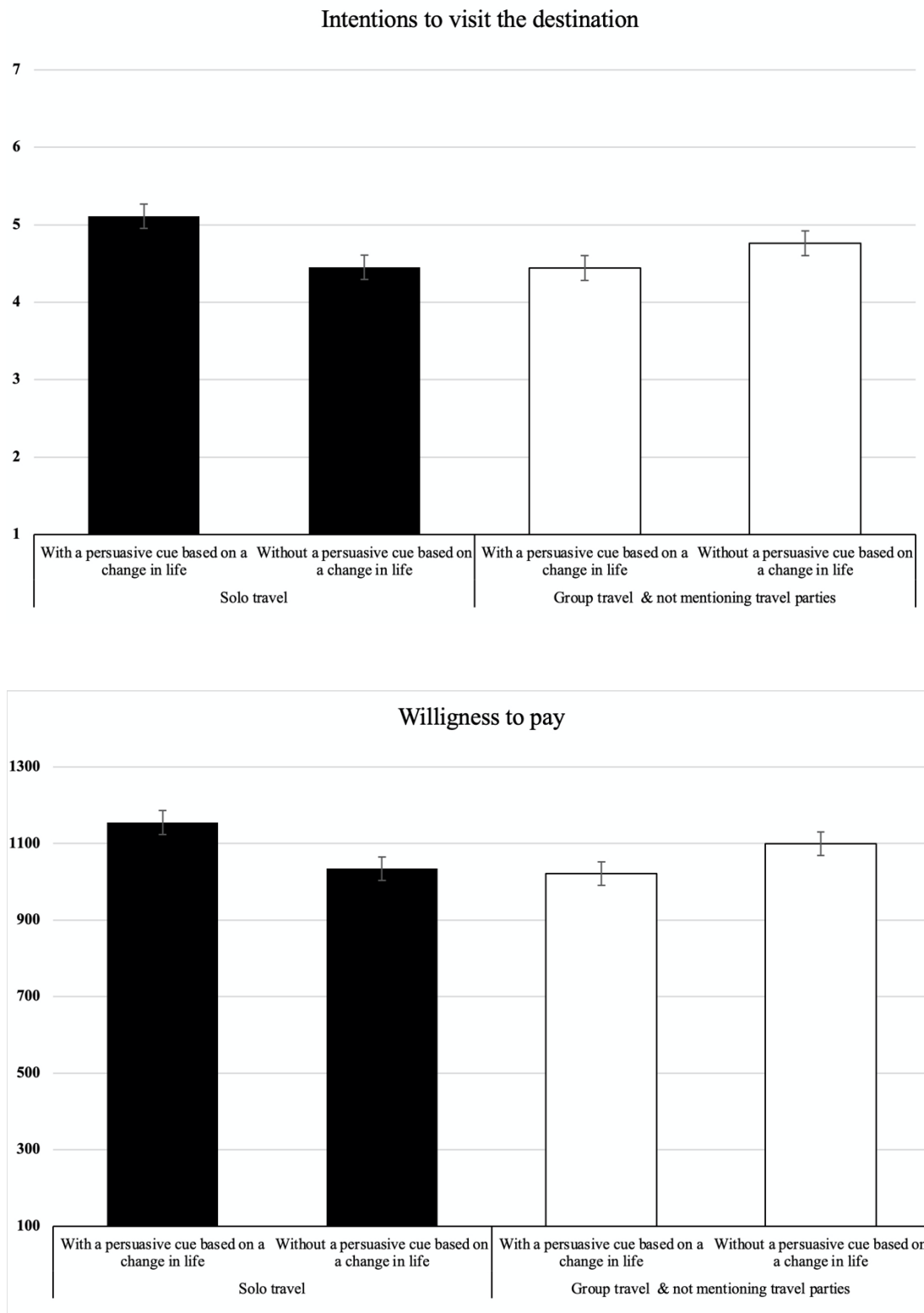
Notes. Main diagonals in bold and italics in the discriminant validity analysis are the square roots of AVE (average variance extracted). CR = Composite Reliability. Items' cross-loadings are after Varimax rotation.

Table 6. Study 3: Validity of measures from the construct and item levels

Discriminant validity. Construct level	Construct category	Alpha; CR; (AVE)	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Fresh start mindset	Mediator (scale)	.93; .93; (.70)	.83		
(2) Intention to visit the destination	Dependent variable (scale)	.94; .93; (.83)	.45	.91	
(3) Willingness to pay	Dependent continuous variable		.18	.40	1.00
Exploratory factor analysis. Item level (variables with a scale form)					
Fresh_start mindset_1	Regardless of present circumstances, someone who travels to the destination presented can chart a new course in life.		.82	.19	.00
Fresh_start mindset_2	Anyone can make a new start if they want after visiting the destination presented.		.84	.11	.01
Fresh_start mindset_3	It is always possible for someone to get a new beginning after visiting the destination presented.		.86	.15	.02
Fresh_start mindset_4	Whatever their past, people can look forward to a new future after visiting the destination presented.		.86	.17	.01
Fresh_start mindset_5	An individual can let go of the past and start anew after visiting the destination presented.		.82	.20	.13
Fresh_start mindset_6	When something bad happens, a person can choose to create a better life after visiting the destination presented.		.83	.22	.09
Intention_1	I really want to visit the destination presented.		.17	.93	.11
Intention_2	The destination presented could be among my most desired future trips.		.27	.87	.13
Intention_3	If I could, I would visit the destination presented in the future.		.18	.92	.13
Willingness to pay	[Budget allocation, continuous variable]		.07	.24	.96

Notes. Main diagonals in bold and italics in the discriminant validity analysis are the square roots of AVE (average variance extracted). CR = Composite Reliability. Items' cross-loadings are after Varimax rotation.

Table 7. Study 3: Effects of travel typology and destination persuasive communication on intention and willingness to pay



Note. Error bars represent standard errors of the means. Willingness to pay is operationalized as a continuous dependent variable (units correspond to dollars).

Figure 1. Study 2: Mediation model

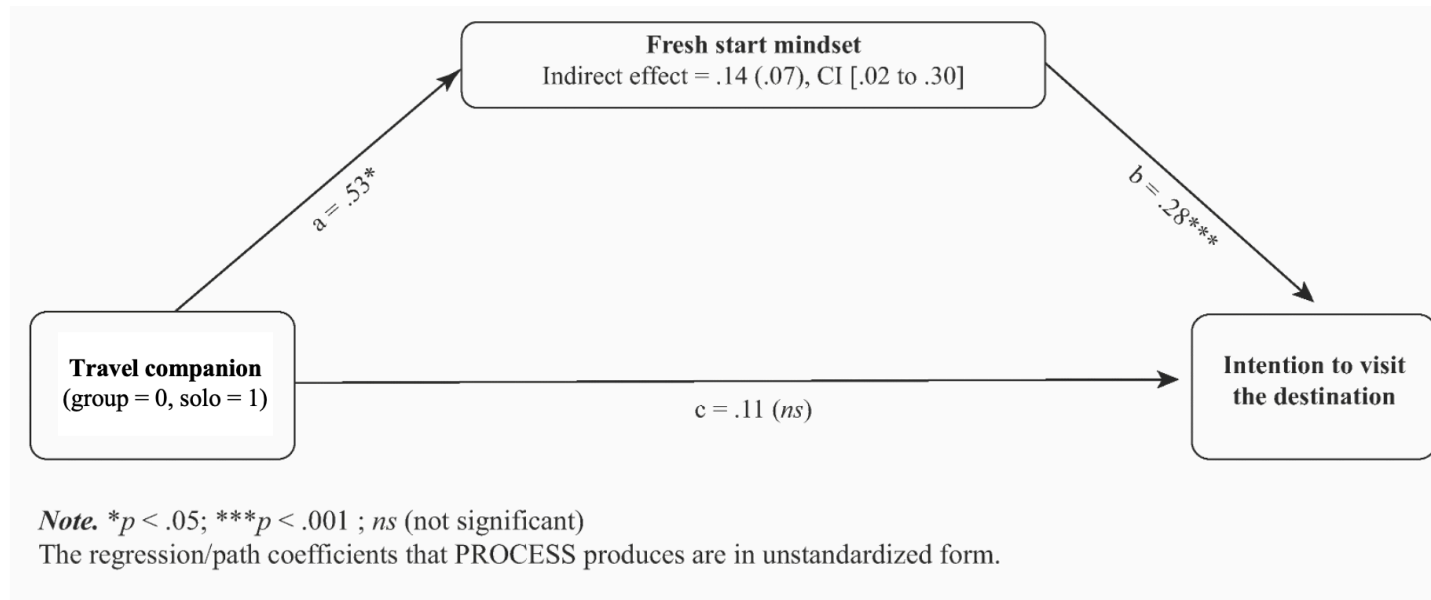
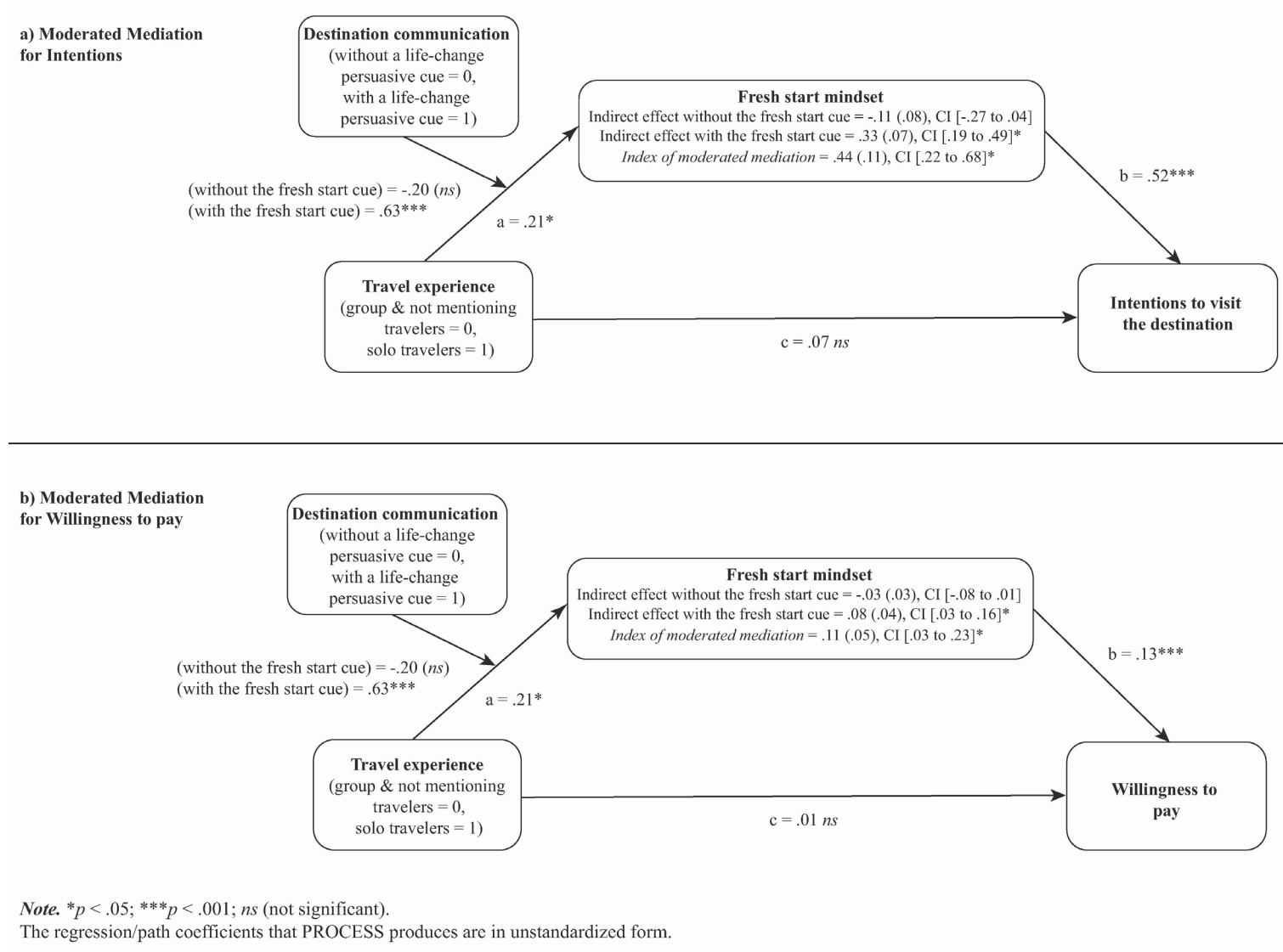









Figure 2. Study 3: Moderated mediation model



Appendix A. Study 1, images proposed by participants that represent a fresh start while traveling

				
Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
				
Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8	Participant 9	Participant 10
				
Participant 11	Participant 12	Participant 13	Participant 14	Participant 15
				
Participant 16	Participant 17	Participant 18	Participant 19	Participant 20

Appendix B. Study 2, experimental stimuli

(1) Solo travel

Please imagine the following situation:

You have planned a solo trip to a tourist destination for your next vacation.

(2) Travel in a group

Please imagine the following situation:






You have planned a trip with your friends to a tourist destination for your next vacation.

Appendix C. Study 2, outputs of the mediation model.

Direct effects	Coefficient	Standard error	<i>t</i>-value	Lower limit confidence interval	Upper limit confidence interval	<i>p</i>-value
Travel companion → Fresh start mindset	.53	.23	2.29	.07	.99	< .05
Fresh start mindset → Intention to visit the destination	.28	.06	4.17	.14	.41	< .001
Travel companion → Intention to visit the destination	.11	.16	.69	-.20	.43	.48
Indirect effect	Coefficient	Bootstrapping standard error	Bootstrapping lower limit confidence interval	Bootstrapping upper limit confidence interval		
Travel companion → Fresh start mindset → Intention to visit the destination	.14	.07	.02	.30		

Note. The confidence level for all intervals in the output is 95%, and the number of bootstrap samples used for the percentile bootstrap confidence intervals is 5,000.

Appendix D. Study 3, experimental stimuli

Solo travel	Travel in a group	Not mentioning travel parties
Imagine you are planning a solo trip to a destination called "Paraiso Beach," and you encounter the following information about the destination:	Imagine you are planning a group trip to a destination called "Paraiso Beach," and you encounter the following information about the destination:	Imagine you are planning a trip to a destination called "Paraiso Beach," and you encounter the following information about the destination:
 <p>Here, all is ready for you</p>	 <p>Here, all is ready for you</p>	 <p>Here, all is ready for you</p>
Solo travel with a persuasive cue based on tourists' life change via a fresh start	Travel in a group with a persuasive cue based on tourists' life change via a fresh start	Not mentioning travel parties with a persuasive cue based on tourists' life change via a fresh start
Imagine you are planning a solo trip to a destination called "Paraiso Beach," and you encounter the following information about the destination:	Imagine you are planning a group trip to a destination called "Paraiso Beach," and you encounter the following information about the destination:	Imagine you are planning a trip to a destination called "Paraiso Beach," and you encounter the following information about the destination:
 <p>Here, all is ready for your <i>fresh start</i></p>	 <p>Here, all is ready for your <i>fresh start</i></p>	 <p>Here, all is ready for your <i>fresh start</i></p>

Appendix E. Study 3, outputs of the moderated mediation model

Direct effects	Coefficient	Standard error	t-value	Lower limit confidence interval	Upper limit confidence interval	p-value
<i>Conditional effect of the focal predictor at values of the moderator (destination communication)</i>						
·Communication without a life-change persuasive cue: Travel experience → Fresh start mindset	-.20	.14	-1.40	-.49	.08	.16
·Communication with a life-change persuasive cue: Travel experience → Fresh start mindset	.63	.14	4.33	.34	.91	< .001
<i>Direct effect of the focal predictor at the general level (not considering the moderator)</i>						
· Travel experience → Fresh start mindset	.21	.10	2.00	.03	.41	< .05
<i>Direct effects</i>						
·Fresh start mindset → Intention to visit the destination	.52	.04	10.83	.43	.62	< .001
·Fresh start mindset → Willingness to pay	.13	.03	4.19	.06	.18	< .001
·Travel experience → Intention to visit the destination	.07	.12	.63	-.16	.31	.52
·Travel experience → Willingness to pay	.01	.07	.22	-.13	.16	.82
<i>Interaction</i>						
·Destination communication * (Travel Experience → Fresh start mindset)	.83	.20	4.04	.43	1.24	< .001
Indirect effects	Coefficient	Bootstrapping standard error	Bootstrapping lower limit confidence interval	Bootstrapping upper limit confidence interval		
<i>Conditional indirect effects at values of the moderation (destination communication)</i>						
·Communication without a life-change persuasive cue: Travel experience → Fresh start mindset → Intention to visit the destination	-.11	.08	-.27	.04		
·Communication with a life-change persuasive cue: Travel experience → Fresh start mindset → Intention to visit the destination	.33	.07	.19	.49		
·Communication without a life-change persuasive cue: Travel experience → Fresh start mindset → Willingness to pay	-.02	.02	-.07	.01		
·Communication with a life-change persuasive cue: Travel experience → Fresh start mindset → Willingness to pay	.08	.03	.02	.16		
<i>Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects)</i>						
·Travel experience → Fresh start mindset → Intention to visit the destination	.44	.11	.22	.68		
·Travel experience → Fresh start mindset → Willingness to pay	.11	.05	.03	.23		

Note: The confidence level for all intervals in the output is 95%, and the number of bootstrap samples used for the percentile bootstrap confidence intervals is 5,000.